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Artists: Brazilian

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The artistic identity of Brazil includes the influences of its indigenous peoples and each of the successive cultures that laid claim to the land, and thus its maritime art reveals a rich blend of native and European styles.

Colonial Period

Much of Brazil's early maritime art came from the artists and draftsmen who traveled to Brazil, seeking to document the newly discovered territories. Images of the exotic Brazilian coast were sketched into personal journals and ship's logs. Maps and drawings allowed mariners to navigate the extensive Brazilian coast. There are few works by known artists, however, from the colonial period. Seventeenth-century engravings of Todos os Santos Bay, published in London, were some of Europe's first views of the Brazilian harbor. Dutch painter Frans Post (1612–1680) painted Brazilian coastal scenes in 1637. In the eighteenth century, Portuguese draftsmen Jose Joachim Freire (published in the *Viagem filosofia*) and Joachim Jose Codina (through the Gabinete de historia natural) created images that captured the period both culturally and historically.

Art in colonial Brazil is often associated with public structures, including churches and public plazas. Religious art and architecture are prevalent, but extant examples of maritime motifs are rare. Some examples include the eighteenth-century Hospice of Boa Viagem, whose tiles depict Portuguese ships, and the Great Hall at Santa Casa da Misericórdia, which also has glazed tiles featuring a maritime motif.

Six panels created for the pavilion at the Passeio Público in Rio also contain maritime scenes. Painted in the eighteenth century by painter and stage designer Leandro Joaquim (c. 1738–1798), these works are considered some of the finest examples of eighteenth-century Rio artwork. These panels include a naval scene, a pilgrimage by sea, whaling motifs, and a view of Boqueirão Lagoon.

Nineteenth-Century Brazil

In the nineteenth century, Brazilian art continued to exhibit many of the characteristics of its European counterparts. Numbers of European artists were beginning to travel or emigrate to Brazil, bringing their particular style of art with them. When Maria Leopoldina, Archduchess of Austria, traveled to Rio de Janeiro in 1817, her arrival was captured by Viennese artist Franz Fröhbeck, who accompanied her (the works are now in the collection of the Hispanic Society of America). In a later expedition with Baron von Langsdorff, German draftsman and painter Johann-Moritz

Brazilian

The history of maritime art in Brazil reflects the history of trade and empire in the South Atlantic. Brazil's strategic position along the southern trade routes made it the port of choice for mariners and the target of land battles for over three hundred years. First claimed by Portugal in 1500, Brazil was colonized by the Dutch from 1637 to 1654; it was then fought over by Holland, Spain, and France until it was reclaimed by Portugal. In 1889 it became the Estados Unidos do Brazil, a modern federation of twenty-one states.

Rugendas sketched views of Bahia and Rio de Janeiro, which were published after his return to Germany in 1825.

The nineteenth century also saw an increase in native Brazilian artists. After 1822, King Pedro II of Portugal established an academy of art in Brazil with a focus on teaching the European style. This early Brazilian art closely followed the tenets of neoclassicism and eclecticism, mirroring the changes in French, German, and Iberian schools. It was not until Brazil became officially independent that the style and content of its art began to change.

Modern Period

When Brazil was proclaimed a republic in 1889, a freshness of artistic spirit seemed to capture the new country. The "Belle Epoque," as it was called, began in 1889 and lasted until well into the twentieth century, as Brazilians began to redefine their artistic canvas. The *Semana de Arte Moderna* (Week of Modern Art Festival) was established in São Paulo. Artists began to experiment with colors and media that were counter to the classical standards of the nineteenth century, and maritime art became expressive, modern, and uniquely Brazilian. *Porto de Grão, Valencia, Espanha, 1927*, by Antonio Garcia Bento (1897–1929), depicts a port with swirling sky and brilliantly colored fishing boats (Museu Nacional de Belas Artes, Rio de Janeiro). In 1923 the artist Tarsila do Amaral (1886–1973) traveled to Paris and was exposed to the Cubist movement. As a result, her later images contain some elements of the geometric, blocky style, including *Port, 1953*, which was reminiscent of her cubist *Pau-brasil* phase, characterized by geometric shapes and a blue-rose landscape.

Maritime themes became more visible in the twentieth century as artists experimented with more distinctly Brazilian cultural and social themes. Osvaldo Goeldi's woodcuts (1895–1961) are filled with fishing motifs, while Alberto de Veiga Guignard's work (1892–1962) includes images of the Minas docks. Jose Pancetti (1902–1958) began painting seascapes in 1925 as a naval officer and continued his work even after he left the navy in 1946. His seascapes are his best-known works, demonstrating his love for the sea, as well as his experience as a sailor. Tomas Santa Rosa Jr. painted *Pescadores* (1943; Museu Nacional de Belas Artes, Rio de Janeiro), showing men in traditional garb with fishing pots and casting nets, standing on the dunes and staring out to sea. Santa Rosa revisited this theme repeatedly, creating a series of paintings by the same title—each one capturing a different aspect of the vibrant maritime community.

Artists like Tomas Santa Rosa, Jose Pancetti, Tarsila do Amaral, and their contemporaries have continued the tradition of documenting Brazilian maritime life, which began with the first explorer to Brazil's coast. They are contributing to the timeline of maritime art in a country whose culture and economy has been determined by the sea.

[See also Art; Painting; and Rio de Janeiro.]

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